



Welaka Gazette

February 2022

From The Mayor's Desk

We have hit the ground running in the Town with many new projects happening. We have just started into 2022, and February is already upon us. I hope that everyone is having a safe and happy New Year. First, we have a new Codes Enforcement Officer, Pauline Kinney, sworn in during our January Town Council Meeting. We also have a new Codes Enforcement Board who meet on the 4th Tuesday of the month at 6:00 PM. Our Codes Enforcement Department is working on several unsightly properties in the Town that need to be cleaned up, including several abandoned homes that most everyone knows very well. Let me be clear, the purpose of Codes Enforcement is to ensure our Town looks nice, but it is absolutely not designed to punish people. We seek compliance through education, and finances are only a last resort.

I also wanted to update you on the Town's Ten Million Dollar wastewater grant. I have been meeting with our engineers, and we are working through the planning and permitting process. We expect this process to take approximately fourteen to sixteen months and construction to take roughly the same amount of time. When this project is completed, the Town will have an advanced wastewater treatment plant that will serve the current and future needs of the Town for many years to come. Couple that with the Utility Asset Survey that Florida Rural Water is conducting paid for by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. We will have a five, ten, and twenty-year plan to ensure the plant is always in good operating condition and is never allowed to fall into disrepair. My pledge to you has always been to leave the Town in better shape than I found it, and I intend to keep that promise to you.

I am also very excited about some of the Town events in the coming months, including Food Truck Fridays in April. Starting on April 1st and the first Friday of each month to follow, we will have Food Trucks and Music in the Town parks for residents to come out and enjoy. My goal is to showcase the beauty of our Town and invite others to come and visit and enjoy it as well. I would also like to see us do a Community Cookout in the Town parks in the Spring where we would have a live band and several of our residents can bring their grills, and everyone can come out and enjoy an evening together. I genuinely believe it will bring a sense of community to our Town and invite people to get to know each other better.

On a Town of Welaka Police front, the Town has a brand new Police Cruiser SUV completely outfitted and paid for by a Jag Grant. As you might be aware, I was able to work two part-time officers into our 2021-2022 budget that the Welaka Town Council approved this past October. Our Police Chief, Mike Porath, is working through the process of hiring two officers that will provide police protection on nights and weekends in our Town. Keeping you and your family safe is my top priority. I will keep you updated as we progress forward.

We are also finalizing our Comprehensive Plan that outlines the future land use in our Town. This is a critical step toward what I consider the next phase of the planning process this is the "Master

Planning". In the Master Planning phase, we will get input from our Town residents as we prepare a road map of what we want the Town to look like in twenty years and how we will get there. This is critical in ensuring that our Town grows in a healthy way while still maintaining the charm that we have come to love about Welaka.

On a final note, the Citizens Advisory Board has finalized their recommendations on which roads should be paved in the Town first. I am working closely with Putnam County Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners Bill Pickens to get all the contracts that Putnam County has with paving contractors to solicit bids for paving the Town roads. I promise you that I will work diligently with your Welaka Town Council to ensure you see a paving crew move through our Town and start paving roads. Once we have an idea of cost and how we will budget everything, I plan to create a paving schedule so you will know precisely when you can expect to see your road paved. In the coming months, my staff and I will continue to work diligently alongside your Welaka Town Council to ensure we continue to "move Welaka forward together". In closing, wanted to share with you that I have added new office hours at Welaka Town Hall from 8:00 AM to 12:30 PM Mon-Fri, so if there is anything I can help you with, please feel free to stop by Town Hall. You can also book an in-person or phone appointment with me at www.mayorwatts.com or email me at jwatts@welaka-fl.gov or call me on my cell (386) 559-7080. I stand ready to assist you in any way I can. Until next month I hope everyone has a safe and happy February.

Best regards,
Mayor Jamie D. Watts

From The Council President

Each year, I am approached with a question or comment regarding the spaying and neutering program we follow here in Welaka. At some point, I'm asked why we can't just take the cats away once they are spayed or neutered. Sometimes, I will be asked why we can't just euthanize the cats rather than spay or neuter them. This is often brought up, and because we will be entering 'kitten season, I wanted to take a moment to address our program and how it works.

We follow a tried-and-true program commonly referred to as TNR. TNR actually stands for Trap, Neuter, Release. This humane approach involves trapping the cat, neutering (or spaying) the cat and then releasing it back to the area where it was trapped. Long-term results show that this is one of the most humane and effective ways for reducing the feral or community cat population in a neighborhood. Not only is it effective as a long-term solution, but it also actually immediately improves some of the most annoying feral cat behaviors of yowling and fighting. A neutered cat is typically much less aggressive than an unneutered cat, and the behavior changes are readily apparent.

So now that you understand the "What" of the program, I'll try to explain the "Why." Euthanasia does not typically reduce the population except in the short term. It is also an unpalatable option for most. As far as relocating cats once trapped, that is not really an option either. By doing this, we would be transferring our problems to someone else, somewhere else. The only exceptions to this are, in some cases, when we catch kittens that are young enough to be socialized. In this instance, we try to find someone willing to foster them until they are old enough to be spayed or neutered and a suitable home can be located. In other cases, when cats have been found and trapped in a location that for one reason or another they cannot stay, we do try to relocate them in town closer to a feeding station.

Since we began this program almost four years ago with First Coast No More Homeless Pets out of Jacksonville and, more recently with Flagler Cats out of Bunnell, we have spayed and neutered almost 400 cats. Some of these cats were true ferals, but many are cats that have simply been dropped off in our town, no longer wanted. The spaying and neutering of these cats have been achieved by a concerted effort by volunteers and town employees, alike. We aim to continue this program and would

like to welcome your input. If you have additional questions, would like to volunteer, or just want to report feral cats in your neighborhood, please feel free to contact me via email at jfinch@welaka-fl.gov. I look forward to hearing from you!

In Your Service,
Jessica Finch, Council President

Town Committees & Meetings

The Town of Welaka Charter Committee will meet on February 1st and 15th at 5:00 PM as we continue the process for drafting a new Town Charter. All residents are welcome to come out and join them at Welaka Town Hall.

The Town of Welaka Citizens Advisory Board will meet on February 11th at 9:00 AM as they continue to solicit ideas from the community on how we can improve Welaka. Their top priority currently is prioritizing our Town road for repair and resurfacing. All residents are welcome to come out and join them.

Upcoming Town Meetings

Attend a meeting in person at Welaka Town Hall or watch live via the Town of Welaka Facebook page!

February 8 - Regular Town Council Meeting at 6:00 PM**

February 17 - Zoning Board Meeting at 6:00 PM

February 22 - Code Board Meeting at 6:00 PM

**** All agenda items and attachments for the above meetings must be submitted to the Town Clerk by *no later than 5 pm, February 2, 2022*. Late or incomplete submissions will be placed on the next agenda. Please contact the Town Clerk's office with any questions at deputyclerk@welaka-fl.gov or call us at (386) 467-9800**

February Meter Reading

Utility meters will be read on February 14th, 2022. If you have trouble with water or sewer service, the Town Utility Department is available 24 hours a day at (386) 467-8677 or TDD (800) 955-8771. Please remember to do your part in conserving water.



Need A Meeting With Your Mayor?

To schedule a meeting with your Mayor, please go to www.MayorWatts.com and select the date and time that works for you.



**DO YOU HAVE NEWS FOR THE TOWN OF WELAKA??
PUBLISH IN THE WELAKA GAZETTE!!**

For more information, please contact Welaka Deputy Town Clerk Cara McCoy at deputyclerk@welaka-fl.gov or call her at (386) 524-4011

Garbage Pickup

Garbage and recycling pick-up days will be February 7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th. Yard debris will be picked up on February 7th and 28th. Please call Waste Pro at (386) 328-5445 if you have any issues with your garbage, yard debris or recycling pick up.

Pay Your Water Bill Online & Save Time!

Our utility department now offers all citizens the option to pay water bills online! To take advantage of this convenient new service, register your water account at www.WelakaWater.com. From there you can track monthly water usage and sign up for automatic bill payments so you'll **never worry about late fees again.**

***Please Note:** For assistance with registering your water account online, please contact the Utility Department at (386) 467-9800. As always, payments may still be dropped into our secure wall drop box located on the right side of the front door of Town Hall.*

January's Recognitions and Proclamations

- Larry Peters celebrated his 90th birthday on January 19th
- Proclamation 2022-01 declared January 21, 2022, as Arbor Day in Welaka.
- Proclamation 2021-01 declaring January 21st of each year Gordon L. Sands Jr. Day

If you would like to recognize a Town of Welaka resident for dedicated community service to our Town, a local student with exceptional grades, or to nominate a Town resident who is celebrating a landmarked birthday such as turning 100 years old, please contact our Deputy Town Clerk, Cara McCoy at (386) 524-4011 or email: deputyclerk@welaka-fl.gov. We will be happy to recognize them at our next Council Meeting by public recognition.



Eyeglass Recycling – How You Can Help

South Putnam Lion Club would like to remind you that you can drop your unused glasses by Welaka Town Hall in the dropbox in the main hallway. Donate glasses and change someone's life. Imagine if you could help a child read, an adult succeeds in his job, a senior maintain their independence, and provide our community with more opportunities to grow and thrive.



Family Movie Night in the Park

On February 11, 2022, at 6:30 PM, the Welaka Police Department, in partnership with Friends of Welaka, will host a family movie night in the Jefferson Smith Park located at 1050 Elm Street, Welaka Fl. 32193. The Friends of Welaka will give out free hot dogs and popcorn that evening. The movie that evening will be Paw Patrol. Bring your lawn chair and come out and join us for a great Friday Night in Welaka.



Helping Hand Of Welaka Will Sponsor A Black History Celebration

Dinner will be served on Saturday, February 26, 2022, at Jefferson-Smith Ball Field from 12:00 PM till gone. Everyone is welcome to attend and is asked to wear a mask. They are asking each household to turn in a short story about living/growing up in Welaka or a family Photo Poster. They request all posters to

be turned in as quickly as possible so they can be on display the day of the celebration. please contact Harriet Vanslyke at (631) 764 - 2308 for more information.

TOWN OF WELAKA CONTACT LIST:

Welaka Police Department

Michael Porath - Police Chief
Direct Line: 386-524-4015
Town Hall Extension: 107
mporath@welaka-fl.gov

Welaka Municipal Services

Meghan Allmon - Town Clerk
Direct Line: 386-524-4010
Town Hall Extension: 102
townclerk@welaka-fl.gov

Cara McCoy - Deputy Town Clerk
Direct Line: 386-524-4011
Town Hall Extension: 104
deputyclerk@welaka-fl.gov

Welaka Utility Department

Kendrea Welch - Utility Clerk
Direct Line: 386-524-4016
Town Hall Extension: 103
kwelch@welaka-fl.gov

Welaka Building Department

Justin Morris - Building Inspector
Direct Line: 386-524-4013
Town Hall Extension: 105
building@welaka-fl.gov

Parks Department

John Stuart - General Maintenance Supervisor
Direct Line: 386-546-2338
jstuart@welaka-fl.gov

Codes Enforcement

Pauline Kinney - Codes Enforcement Officer
Direct Line: 386-530-0336
code@welaka-fl.gov

Mayor's Office

Mayor Jamie Watts
(386) 467-9800 Extension: 101
Direct: 386-524-4009
jwatts@welaka-fl.gov

Welaka Town Council

Council President Jessica Finch
386-467-9800 (Option 7, Option 2)
Town Hall Extension: 200
jfinch@welaka-fl.gov

Councilwoman Marianne Milledge
386-467-9800 (Option 7, Option 3)
Town Hall Extension: 201
mmilledge@welaka-fl.gov

Councilwoman Tonya Long
386-467-9800 (Option 7, Option 4)
Town Hall Extension: 202
tonyalong@welaka-fl.gov

Councilwoman Kathy Washington
386-467-9800 (Option 7, Option 5)
Town Hall Extension: 203
kwashington@welaka-fl.gov

Welaka Town Attorney

Patrick Kennedy - Town Attorney
Direct Line: (386) 244-4910
townattorney@welaka-fl.gov



Need To Report An Issue Or Make A Codes Complaint?

Need to report a street or parks issue or make a Codes Enforcement Complaint report online at www.TellTownHall.com



Helping Hands of Welaka Toy Drive

Helping Hands of Welaka is collecting toys to give out to the children who attend the Welaka Christmas Parade & Festival in December of this year. If you would like to donate please contact Harriet Vanslyke at (631) 764 - 2308



Our Community At Work

Friends of Welaka along with Keep Putnam Beautiful, Welaka Women's Club, South Putnam Lions Club, and Welaka Golf Cart Cruisers met on January 8th for a Town-Wide Clean-Up. The cleanup crew picked up over 100 LBS of litter on our streets. They are planning on doing a quarterly town-wide clean-up to ensure our town remains spotless which is something we can all be proud of. We will announce the next Town-wide clean-up in the March newsletter in case others are interesting in joining the effort.

Welaka Town Council Election

The Town of Welaka will hold its Town Council Election on March 8, 2022, from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. at The Church of Welaka located at 638 3rd Ave, Welaka, FL 32193. Voting is only open to residents who live in the Town limits of Welaka, which will show as voting percent four on your voter's ID card. This is the same voting precinct residents vote at during county, state, and National Elections.

Official General Election Ballot
March 8, 2022
Town of Welaka
Putnam County, Florida

Balota Oficial de la Elección General
8 de marzo de 2022
Pueblo de Welaka
Condado de Putnam, Florida

- Instructions: To vote, fill in the oval (●) completely next to your choice.
- Use only the marking device provided or a black or blue pen or marker.
- If you make a mistake, ask for a new ballot. Do not cross out or your vote may not count.
- Instrucciones: Para votar, llene por (●) completo el ovalo que está al lado de su selección.
- Use solamente el dispositivo para marcar provisto o una pluma o plumón negro o azul.
- Si comete un error, pida una balota nueva. No tache porque su voto podría no contarse.

<p>Town Council Member (Vote for Two)</p> <p>miembro del ayuntamiento (Vote por Dos)</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Jessica Finch</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Eddie Johns</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Alexa "Lexi" Peronard</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Kathy L. Washington</p>
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Town residents can receive a vote by mail ballot by calling the Putnam County Supervisor of Elections at (386) 329-0224 and requesting one. If you prefer to vote in person before election day, you can go to the Putnam County Supervisor of Elections office located at 2509 Crill Ave, Suite 900, Palatka, FL 32177, and cast your vote in person. The last day to request a vote by mail ballot is February 26, 2022.

In accordance with Florida Statute 97.055, Voter Registration will be accepted until 5:00 p.m., Monday, February 7, 2022, at Welaka Town Hall, located at 400 4th Avenue, Welaka, Florida, for any resident who lives in the Town limits of Welaka and is not registered to vote. Voters registrations **MUST BE** turned in to the Welaka Town Hall or show a postmark mailed back to the Putnam County Supervisor of Elections by February 7, 2022, to vote in February 8, 2022, Town Election.

There will be a candidate forum on February 2nd at 6:00 p.m. at Shrimps R US More, located at 765 3rd Ave, Welaka, FL 32193. Residents are invited out that evening to hear the candidates speak and ask them questions.

THE WELAKA WOMAN'S CLUB PRESENTS:

BROADWAY SOIREE

FEATURING NINA ALLBERT
ACCOMPANIED BY LAURA RUSSELL
WITH SPECIAL GUESTS
MARGIE NELSON AND RON MARLOWE

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 25

644 C.R. 309 WELAKA

7:00-9:00 P.M.

**JOIN US FOR DESSERTS,
BEVERAGES, AND SHOW TUNES!**

DONATION \$25



GFWC WOMAN'S CLUB OF WELAKA, INC.



644 County Road 309
P. O. Box 154
Welaka, FL 32193
386-467-9706



9th Annual Golf Tournament

The Oaks Golf Club

Saturday, March 5, 2022

Rain date: Saturday March 12, 2022



Scramble - Captain's Choice: 1st \$200 and 2nd \$100
Closest to the Hole - Men and Ladies \$25 each
Club Member: \$40 Non Member: \$50

We need Players, Sponsors, and Gift Certificates.
We need your help to make this our most successful tournament ever!

Pick up a Form: The Oaks Golf Club, Woman's Club on Tuesday, or
call Dee or Carol (numbers below)

Forms returned by or before February 12th Receive \$2 free Raffle Tickets

Immediately following the Tournament, enjoy a complimentary luncheon at the Oaks Club prepared by the Welaka Woman's Club and get results of all Winners, Raffle Prizes and 50/50.

**A portion of proceeds will be donated to the
Crescent City High School Band**

Questions? Call Dee 386-546-2754 or Carol 904-347-7758

Organized 1959
MEMBER

General Federation of Women's Clubs International
GFWC Florida Federation of Women's Clubs

Honoring A Legacy



On Saturday, January 22nd, we gathered in Jefferson Smith Park on a cold afternoon to celebrate Arbor Day and to honor the lives of Mayor Gordon L. Sands, Jr. and Councilman Willie Washington, Jr. We took the time to share stories and acknowledge their loss. We had a large turnout despite the cold weather, showing just how important their life and legacy are to the residents of the town.

These 2 beautiful trees now stand in testament to their life and their service to our community and will be enjoyed for generations to come. We would like to thank the Sands family and the Washington family for joining us today. As well as the Welaka Women's club and Keep Putnam Beautiful for organizing the day.



The Washington Family



The Sands Family

FEBRUARY 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30	31	1 Charter Review Committee Meeting 5:00 PM	2	3	4 Citizens Advisory Board Meeting 9:00 AM Welaka Town Hall Family Movie Night in the Park 6:30 PM	5
	7 Trash, Recycling & Yard Debris Pickup	8 Welaka Town Council Meeting 6:00 PM Welaka Town Hall	9	10	11	12
6						
13	14 Trash & Recycling Pickup Water Meter Reading Day Valentine's Day	15 Charter Review Committee Meeting 5:00 PM	16	17 Zoning Board Meeting 6:00 PM Welaka Town Hall	18	19
20	21 Trash, Recycling & Yard Debris Pickup Presidents' Day	22 Code Enforcement Meeting 6:00 PM Welaka Town Hall	23	24	25 Broadway Soiree Welaka Women's Club 7:00 PM	26 Black History Celebration Dinner Jefferson Smith Park 12:00 PM
27	28 Trash & Recycling Pickup	1	2	3	4	5